

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-10 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05

/064 W

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O R 211550Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2729

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XF, SY

SUBJECT: DE BORCHGRAVE INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT ASAD FEBRUARY 21

SAW DE BORCHGRAVE BRIEFLY FOLLOWING HIS FEB 21
INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT ASAD. SINCE HE WAS LEAVING
DAMSCUS FOR ABU DHABI IMMEDIAETLY, HE COULD NOT
PASS ON FULL TEXT OF INTERVIEW BUT FOLLOWING ARE
MAJOR POINTS:

A. IN ANSWER TO QUESTION HOW HE SAW ME SITUATION
FOLLOWING SECRETARY'S VISIT ASAD SAID THERE WAS
NOTHING GOOD; IT WAS ALL BAD. FOR THIS REASON HE
THOUGHT INTERVIEW SHOULD BE OFF THE RECORD, SINCE
HE SAW NO POINT IN SPREADING FURTHER PESSIMISM.

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B. DE BORCHGRAVE

ASKED WHETHER SYRIA WOULD BE WILLING SIGN "FORMAL PEACE TREATY" WITH ISRAEL IF ISRAEL WITHDREW FROM GOLAN AND AGREED TO ESTABLISHMENT OF PALESTINIAN STATE ON WEST BANK AND GAZA. ASAD REPLIED, "OF COURSE", AND ADDED THAT THIS SHOULD BE NO OBSTACLE ON ROAD TO FINAL SETTLEMENT. SYRIA WOULD SIGN FORMAL PEACE TREATY. ASAD SAID THIS WAS A FUNDAMENTAL POSITION DECIDED BY PARTY LEADERS AND SYRIA WAS SERIOUS ABOUT IT. TREATIES, HE ADDED, WERE MATTERS OF PROCEDURE, AND IMPORTANT THING WAS GETTING TO STAGE WHERE TREATY COULD BE SIGNED. ASAD SAID THERE SHOULD BE STAGE OF ENDING BELLIGERENCY WHICH WOULD MEAN IMPLEMENTATION OF UN RES 242 THEN STAGE OF ESTABLISHING REAL AND LASTING PEACE.

C. DE BORCHGRAVE ASKED HOW SYRIA WOULD VIEW OBTAINING ADDITIONAL FIVE OR SIX KILOMETER SLICE IN SOUTHERN GOLAN IN SECOND STAGE DISENGAGEMENT. ASAD REPLIED THIS WOULD BE OF NO INTEREST AT ALL TO SYRIA. WHAT WAS REQUIRED WAS SUBSTANTIAL MOVEMENT ON GOLAN AT SAME TIME AS MOVEMENT ON OTHER FRONTS AND IT MUST BE ALONG WHOLE GOLAN DISENGAGEMENT LINE.

D. ASAD SAID HE WAS SURE SADAT WOULD NOT ACCEPT A PARTIAL SETTLEMENT. WHEN PUSHED, HOWEVER, ASAD SAID THAT IF SADAT WAS UNABLE TO ACHIEVE ANYTHING ELSE HE WOULD CHOOSE LEAST HARMFUL COURSE. ASAD ADDED THAT HE HOPED PRICE PAID BY SADAT WOULD NOT BE TOO HIGH AND HIGHFUL TO ARABS AS A WHOLE.

E. WHEN DE BORCHGRAVE SOUGHT REACTION TO ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN ACCORD, INCLUDING PASSES AND ABU RUDEIS OIL FIELDS. ASAD ANSWERED HE WAS NOT AWARE OF DETAILS. HE SAID DR. KISSINGER HAD TOLD HIM THAT HE HAD NOT YET REACHED THAT STAGE.

F. IN REPLY TO QUESTION ON US DEFENSE GUARANTEES FOR ISRAEL, ASAD SAID SUCH GUARANTEES WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE UNDER FINAL SETTLEMENT BUT NOT DURING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ANY PRELIMINARY STAGE. ANY US GUARANTEE BEFORE FINAL SETTLEMENT WOULD ONLY CREATE DEEP AND LASTING ARAB HOSTILITY AGAINST US.
PELLETREAU

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